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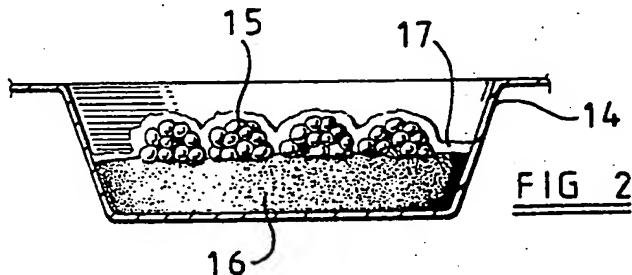
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(54) Food preparation method

(57) A method of preparing food stuffs such as pie or tart fillings comprises preparing the materials which include solid or semi-solid constituents 15 such as fruit, and a liquid content 16, 17, and filling these into temporary containers 14 in which they are frozen. The frozen masses are then ready for use, being placed in pastry or other final containers while still in their frozen state.



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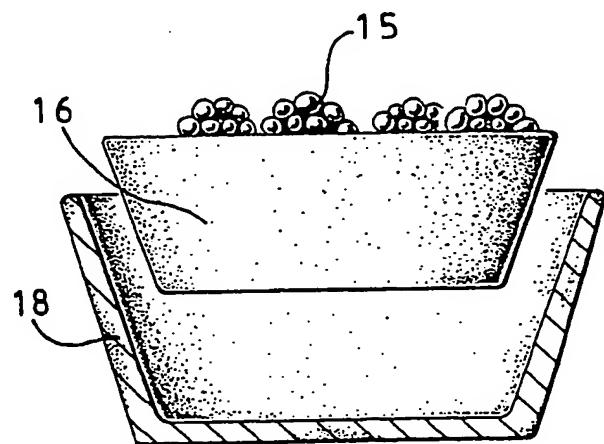
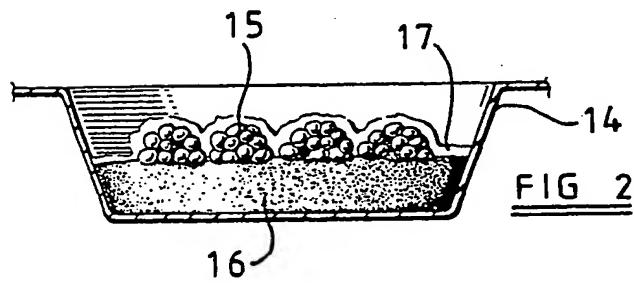
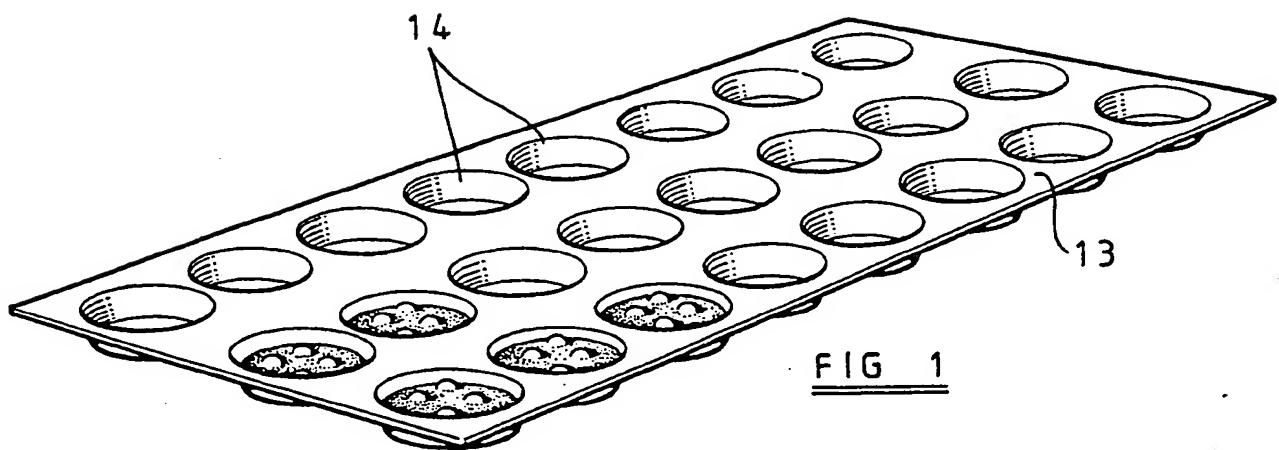
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SPECIFICATION**Food preparation method**

- 5 This invention relates to a method of preparing foods, such as fruit or vegetables, for use in items such as pies, tarts or other products in which a filling is placed in a pastry or other casing, which may also be edible.
- 10 Traditionally, fruits or the like are prepared by peeling, coring or whatever is appropriate and they are then placed, with other ingredients, in the pastry or other casing shortly prior to sale and consumption. Deep freezing methods enable such finished products to be produced in quantity by factory or mass production methods but the finished products are not always convenient to handle and also plant which is suitable for fruit preparation may have no facilities for pastry production or vice versa. Also,
- 15 there is a section of the market which requires only small quantities to be fully prepared at one time, to avoid items from becoming stale.

To enable this to be accomplished it is usual to supply the fruit and other ingredients in bulk, these being placed in the pastry or other case as and when required, but this can lead to poor presentation, mess and waste, and is also time consuming at the point of sale.

It is the object of this invention to provide a method of preparing foods which enables mass production procedures to be followed and in which the preparation of the finished product is simple and quick and good presentation can be reliably achieved.

35 In accordance with the present invention, there is provided a method of preparing foods comprising preparing the raw materials, including solid or semi-solid constituents and a proportion of a liquid content, filling these in temporary containers and then 40 freezing the combined materials, in their temporary containers.

In use the product prepared by this method can be stored until ready for use, in frozen condition and then, when required, it is removed from the temporary container, still frozen and inserted into a pastry or other final container, ready for sale or consumption.

50 Pie or tart fillings or other products including pastry or other edible cases can be prepared in this way. It is possible by this method to arrange fruit or other food in an attractive way prior to freezing and decorative effects can be maintained to the point of sale or consumption.

The invention will now be described by way of example with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 shows multiple containers for use in the method according to the invention;

Figure 2 shows one of the containers with a fruit filling; and

Figure 3 shows the fruit filling placed into a prepared pastry or other container to make up the finished product.

Figures 1 to 3 show stages in the production of a tart or pie made with a fruit, such as raspberries and

additional ingredients such as fruit pulp, juices, cream or other filling material. Many combinations of foods can be treated in the manner to be described. These are to be inserted into small, individual pastry shells or cups.

Figure 1 shows a one piece tray 13 which includes a number of individual containers 14 formed by depressions. One of these containers is also shown in Figure 2. The container assembly may be constructed from a thin plastic or other suitable material to which fruit or other food stuffs will not readily adhere.

As shown in Figure 3 each small individual container is filled with fruit 15 and other liquid or semi-liquid fruit substances 16 and the whole assembly is coated with a thin layer of a gel 17. Any desired combination of fruit or other substances can be used but sufficient liquid content should be included to enable the whole assembly to become a solid coherent mass upon freezing. When all the individual containers 14 are filled the assembly is frozen.

When required for use, the individual fillings are removed from their temporary containers 14, while still in their frozen condition. Therefore while each is a solid mass they are placed, as shown in Figure 2, into individual prepared pastry or other cups 18. Only then is the finished product allowed to defrost, ready for sale or consumption.

Any combination of fruit, vegetable or other food substances which are suitable for freezing can be handled in this way.

The temporary containers used during assembly and prior to freezing may be of any convenient shape or size and in certain circumstances may only comprise a flat sheet onto which the fruit and combination of substances is laid.

The complete frozen assemblies can be used in a number of finished products including pies, tarts or other fruit products of which the container is edible or to other food stuffs in which there is no final edible container. Decorative effects produced on assembly are therefore retained until sale or consumption.

The shapes of the containers may be of any desired kind. In some instances, the assembly of fruit and other substances may have an upwardly, inwardly inclined side edge. By this means, the fruit and substances may be neatly surrounded by cream or other different food product, while still in frozen state and the risk of mixture of the fruit juices with the cream or other product, is minimised. In this example, the assembly as prepared by this method may be only a relatively small part of a complete finished product. The shape of the temporary container is such as to produce the required shape of the fruit and other ingredients assembly.

CLAIMS

1. A method of preparing foods comprising preparing the raw materials, including solid, or semi-solid constituents, and a proportion of a liquid content, filling these constituents and said liquid content into a plurality of temporary containers and then freezing the combined materials in their temporary containers to form respective coherent masses.

2. A method as claimed in Claim 1 in which the respective coherent masses are taken, while still frozen, from their temporary containers and inserted into respective containers for sale or consumption.
- 5 3. A method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims wherein the solid or semi-solid constituents are fruit, and the liquid content includes juices, cream, or other preparations whereby, when frozen, the fruit can be joined in a coherent mass.
- 10 4. A method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims for production of pie or tart fillings which can be taken whilst frozen out of their temporary containers and inserted into pastry or other final containers.
- 15 5. A method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims in which the solid or semi-solid constituents and said liquid content are formed with an inclined side edge, or other formation, in which a further product can be inserted while the materials are still in frozen state, thus minimising risk of mixing of the said further product with said materials.
- 20 6. A method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims in which the materials are filled into a plurality of temporary containers which are formed in trays, each tray having a number of such temporary containers.
- 25 7. A method of preparing foods substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to and as shown in the accompanying drawings.

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